

LEICESTERSHIRE AND RUTLAND RESIDENTS BENEFIT FROM SKILLS PLEDGE SIGN UP

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Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service has made a public commitment to ensure their 900 staff are up to date with the skills and knowledge they need to do the best job they can for their local communities.

Assistant Chief Fire and Rescue Officer Ian Scarrott has signed the Learning and Skills Council's Skills Pledge, a public commitment to support the skills development of all its employees to a minimum of NVQ Level 2 (the equivalent of five good GCSEs), to ensure that all staff are skilled, competent and able to continue to make a full contribution to the success of the service.

Ian Scarrott said:

"By signing up to the Skills Pledge we're declaring our commitment to our employees, ensuring they have the skills and knowledge to make sure they can do the best job they can for the people that live, work and visit Leicestershire and Rutland. A skilled workforce is one that applies their knowledge and skills to enable them to respond quickly and efficiently to emergencies, incidents and to proactively promote safety.

“Training is an integral part of our firefighters’ working day, ensuring they are fully up to speed with the latest specialist equipment and fully competent in their roles to meet the needs of incidents across the two counties and the City of Leicester.

“Our support staff also need training to ensure they are fully able to support the Service in our core roles of preventing fires, protecting people and properties and responding to emergency incidents.

“We also hope that by signing up to the Skills Pledge we can show other public sector services that we are an employer that is committed to developing our workforce.”

Sue Peake, Learning and Skills Council East Midlands, said:

"Skills are vitally important for individuals, for their future employability and for the success of organisations throughout the UK. We are delighted that Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is committed to ensuring their workforce receive the training and development necessary to keep their skills up to date in such a vital sector. It gives a clear message to industry and the wider community across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland that skills are important at all levels within an organisation.”

“By signing up to The Skills Pledge Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service is making a commitment to investing in the education and training of its staff and supporting them to achieve Level 2 qualifications.

"We would encourage all employers across the East Midlands to sign up to the Skills Pledge. By making a commitment to the Skills Pledge employers will also have access to a Skills Broker, part of the LSC’s Train to Gain service, through

whom they can access free literacy, numeracy and first full Level 2 qualification courses as well as a range of partially subsidised activities.”

Mitch Crane, 40, has been a fire fighter with Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service for 16 years. He said:

“We train on a daily basis as we have so much new equipment we need to be able to use and there’s a chance we could get called to any situation so we need to know how to deal with everything – from helicopter incidents to trapped animals to chemical spills to road accidents. By signing up to the Skills Pledge it shows the value the Service continues to place on training.”

Brendan Kelly, 47, has been with the service for 19 years. He said:

"Alongside continuous training to get up to speed with new equipment we also have personal development plans to ensure any specific skills that will help us in the job are met, constantly ensuring our skills are up to date."

The Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership provide the support for the Public Service Compact in Leicestershire. They’re keen to encourage public sector organisations to sign up to the Skills Pledge.

Ray Flude, Director of Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership, said:

“It’s excellent news that Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service have signed up to the Skills Pledge – it really demonstrates the value they place on their staff and the communities within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland. We hope this sets an

example to other public sector organisations across Leicester and Leicestershire and encourages them to sign up.”

A launch event at the Western Fire and Rescue Station, Aikman Avenue, New Parks gave staff the chance to find out more about the opportunities available.

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Notes to Editors:

1. Photographs available. Visit <http://nds.coi.gov.uk> or call Helen Clarke at COI News and PR on 0115 9712787
2. The Leitch Review of Skills, published in December 2006, warned that the UK must ‘raise its game’ on skills at all levels if it is to sustain and improve its position in the global economy. The Skills Pledge fulfils a key recommendation made in the review, at the heart of a new ‘deal’ where employers will be able to shape the skills system to meet their needs, in return for prioritising skills training at all levels.
3. The Skills Pledge is a voluntary commitment by employers to increasing the skills of their workforce for the benefit of the business.
4. For more information about the Skills Pledge visit www.traintogain.gov.uk/skillspledge

Issued on behalf of the Learning and Skills Council by COI News and PR. For media interviews or for further information contact Helen Clarke at COI News and PR on 0115 9712787